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Agreement With Local Universities to Provide Research Training at EPA Laboratory

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Research Triangle Park, NC.....The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory has signed three-year cooperative training agreements with three Triangle universities to offer educational opportunities to students and postdoctoral fellows in environmental health sciences. The initial funding of the three agreements totals \$1.3 million.

The training agreements are with Duke University, North Carolina State University, and the University of North Carolina's Department of Environmental Sciences & Engineering at Chapel Hill. Training agreements are already in place with UNC's Toxicology Curriculum and North Carolina Central University. The new agreements will significantly increase the number of trainees. The current program supports 55 trainees.

It is the EPA laboratory's first comprehensive training agreement with Duke and NCSU for undergraduate, predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees at EPA's research facilities in Research Triangle Park, NC. The laboratory will have significant involvement by providing scientific mentors and research facilities for selected candidates. The educational institutions will coordinate closely with EPA researchers.

The training agreement has been established to identify and provide training for candidates in the environmental health sciences and to promote opportunities for increased scientific cooperation among the universities and EPA. The long-range goal of the educational program is to expand the pool of qualified scientists interested in environmental health research.

"Students will benefit from hands-on laboratory experience and our principal investigators will enjoy the new and fresh approaches brought by students and postdoctoral fellows to environmental research," said Hal Zenick, acting director of the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory. Under the agreements, undergraduate students will gain research experience, graduate students will complete their research requirements for their master's in science or doctoral degrees and postdoctoral trainees will gain research experience in a state-of-the-science federal government environmental sciences research laboratory.

LaMont Bryant, who spent two years working in a research training program at EPA while getting his master's in science at NCCU, said his experience was invaluable. "It provides an opportunity for students to work side-by-side with top-notch experts working at the cutting-edge of environmental science," he said. Bryant is pursuing his doctorate at UNC and continues his work in developmental biology in the Reproductive Toxicology Division at the lab as a guest researcher.

